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Karen Schledewitz

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Linda S. Boeckner

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, lboeckner1@unl.edu

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Schledewitz, Karen and Boeckner, Linda S., "NF05-615 Trans Fatty Acids — Nutrient Listing Required by 2006" (2005). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 1775.

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Trans Fatty Acids — Nutrient Listing Required by 2006

by Karen Schledewitz, Extension Assistant
Linda Boeckner, Extension Nutrition Specialist

Trans fatty acids (TFAs) are a type of fat that occurs naturally in small amounts in beef and dairy products. They are also present in hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils found in processed foods. TFAs have been produced by adding hydrogen to vegetable oil making the fat more solid and less likely to turn rancid. Food companies began adding hydrogenated oils containing TFAs to many of their products because they help stabilize product flavor and give it a significantly longer shelf life. When introduced as a food ingredient, hydrogenated oils were considered a healthier fat than fats rich in saturated fatty acids. However, recent research has linked TFA intake to increased LDL cholesterol which leads to increased risks of coronary heart disease including heart attack, similar to the risks associated with high saturated fatty acid intake.

Trans fatty acids are starting to appear on the Nutrition Facts panel. By Jan. 1, 2006, **food companies will be required to report TFA content on the Nutrition Facts panel if the food product contains more than 0.5 grams per serving.** This regulation is a response by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to consumer concerns over research results linking TFA intake to increases in LDL cholesterol. The Nutrition Facts Label regulation is intended to provide information on the TFA content of food which in turn will assist consumers in maintaining heart-healthy dietary practices.

The new "trans fat" listing on the Nutrition Facts Label **will appear directly under the line reporting the amount of saturated fat per serving (as shown in the inserted sample label).** The label will not report a % Daily Value (percentage of total daily recommendation based on 2,000 calorie diet) for trans fats because that guideline has not yet been set.

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences has said that the trend between higher TFA intake

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228 g)

Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250

Calories from Fat 110

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 12g 16%

Saturated Fat 3g 15%

Trans Fat 1.5 g

Cholesterol 30 mg 10%

Sodium 470mg 20%

Total Carbohydrate 0.1g 10%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Sugars 5g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4%

Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 20%

Iron 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calories diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

		Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than		0.5g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than		20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than		300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than		2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrates			300mg	375g
Dietary Fiber			25g	30g

and increased cardiovascular heart disease risk suggests there should be negligible TFA intake from our diets. However, because TFAs are “unavoidable in ordinary diets,” **they recommend that “trans fatty acid consumption be as low as possible while maintaining a nutritionally adequate diet.”** The average American consumes 5 to 6 grams of TFAs a day. Eating less than that amount would be nutritionally advisable in light of recent research.

Currently consumers can learn if a food product contains any TFAs by looking for **“partially hydrogenated oils”** in the ingredient list on food label. TFAs will be found in the **greatest amount in foods that contain partially hydrogenated fats such as stick margarine, solid vegetable shortening, commercially prepared baked foods and fried fast foods.** TFAs are found in somewhat smaller amounts in processed food products such as cake mixes, chips, salad dressing and microwave popcorn. After identifying partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient listing, look for the total amount of fat in one serving. If the total amount of fat is high, presence of TFAs will also be proportionally higher than a product which has a low amount of total fat.

For heart health, lower both saturated and trans fat intake. Some simple tips include:

- Use tub or liquid margarine labeled “trans fat free.”
- Use olive or canola oils for cooking or salads, and avoid fats such as solid shortening, lard and butter.
- Replace chips, crackers and cookies with low-fat or unprocessed foods such as fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid commercially fried foods.

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**File under: FOODS AND NUTRITION
C-2p, Nutritive Value of Foods**

Issued January 2005

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